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NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION: VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Technical session

Addendum

Community and disasters in Latin America: action strategies

Summary of the submission by Mr. Andrew Maskrey, Intermediate Technology Development Group, Peru

1. The main argument of this document is that the disaster prevention and management models now used in Latin America have basic conceptual and methodological flaws. The models are based on formal experience of vulnerability and disasters from which a set of conventional instruments on disaster prevention and reduction are derived.

2. Our theory is that, because of the economic and spatial developments that have occurred in Latin America in the last 20 years, local experience of vulnerability is changing and becoming increasingly heterogeneous. Consequently, there is a split between the formal experience on which outside intervention is based and the local, but real, experiences of the population. This split leads to the rejection or failure of many of the disaster prevention and reduction programmes in the region.

3. It is being recommended that disaster prevention and management programmes should be redesigned on the basis of real experiences of vulnerability and that flexible action strategies suited to local conditions should be adopted. The implementation of such strategies means that far-reaching changes in the institutional framework for disaster prevention and management in the region will be required to make it more decentralized, people-oriented and practical.

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